

How to escape: Tips and Sites for Working or Volunteering Abroad



Teaching yoga on the beach in Anguilla. Photograph: Gary Calton for the Observer

Transportable skills

Yoga instructors can work all over the world – and the initial training can be done abroad, too. The directory at yogaeverywhere.com lists residential training courses from France and Italy to India and Thailand. Would-be tour guides can gain qualifications from the [Institute of Tourist Guiding](#) and the [Hospitality Guild](#), though many adventure travel companies are more interested in skills and attitudes. [Exodus](#), for example, prioritises language skills, an interest in outdoor pursuits, experience of working with people of all ages and knowledge of a particular culture or region. Work as a massage therapist is another way to combine travel and earning. Well-regarded courses abroad include the [Bali International Spa Academy](#) and the [Costa Rica School of Massage Therapy](#). Or how about training as a chef or a mixologist, and getting a job in a beach resort or on a cruise ship?

Teach English abroad



Dutch volunteer Ruth Vechoeff teaches children in Langshan Village, Lianhua, southwest China, on non-profit organisation Greenway China's volunteer programme. Photograph: Zhou Hua/Xinhua Press/Corbis

Many schools require English teachers to have a qualification: courses offered by tefl.org.uk range from a basic 20-hour weekend course for £199 to a 150-hour premier course at £399. There are also online-only options, and 30% off all courses booked by tomorrow; enter code THIS YEAR when booking.

If teaching a class full of kids sounds daunting, becoming a conversation coach is a more accessible way into education abroad. Coaches live with a host family and tutor their children for 15 hours a week in return for accommodation and meals – try interexchange.org, which has programmes in Austria, Chile, France, Germany, Italy and Spain.

The British Council has year-long, paid placements for language assistants, working 12-20 hours a week to support English teachers in an overseas school or university. Applications for the 2016-17 academic year are still open for Spain and China (until 21 February), although applications to all other countries have now closed.

Get Sporty



A ski instructor on the nursery slopes at Arinsal, Andorra. Photograph: Alamy

Website Natives.co.uk has a variety of snow sports jobs and courses, including learning to be a ski instructor in **Japan** and learning to be a ski patroller – a member of the emergency response team – in **Canada**. Most ski tour operators start advertising for the winter season from June, and the main recruitment season is July to October. More jobs become available in November – with last-minute dropouts – and throughout the season. The first week in January is the prime time for sackings and resignations.

Watersportstaff.co.uk lists aquatic positions from waterskiing instructors in **Sardinia** to skippers in **Greece**. Sites such as Crewbay.com connect amateur and professional yacht crews with boats all over the world. Sportingopportunities.com has courses and internships in a variety of sports-related jobs, from diving in **Australia** to physiotherapy in **St Lucia**.

Think Seasonal



Pruning vines on a farm in New South Wales, Australia. Photograph: Tim Wimborne/Reuters

Seasonworkers.com has a comprehensive directory of seasonal jobs abroad, including in resorts, childcare and hospitality, and as sports instructors. It also runs courses in skills such as being a chalet cook in the **French Alps** or a surf instructor in **South Africa** and **Mozambique**.

Farm work is another option – in **Australia**, for example, harvest seasons by region are listed on jobsearch.gov.au/HarvestTrail, so travelers can earn while on the move. Visitoz.org has five-day farming courses and helps arrange paid placements. And thanks to recently amended Australian immigration law, any traveler on a year's working-holiday visa who spends three months or more as a farm worker in rural areas can apply for a second working-holiday visa.

Volunteer for bed and board



A European volunteer in Tanzania. Photograph: Alamy

Workaway.info has placements across the globe where hosts provide bed and board (on varying bases) in return for a few hours' work each day in manual labour, childcare, creative projects or more skilled roles. Other schemes run along the same lines include: HelpX.net, helpstay.com, growfood.org and globalhelpswap.com.

Trusty www.woof.org.uk is still going strong, with volunteer placements on organic farms in wonderful settings, bucolic, tropical and everything in between, including the UK.

Check out skilled and non-skilled positions in **African countries** at volunteerafrica.com and truetravellers.org for links to projects across **Asia**, from **Indonesia** to **Nepal**. For **Latin America**, see volunteersouthamerica.net and volunteerlatinamerica.com. The latter has language programmes too. For **France**, there's pole-emploi.fr/accueil, and 18-25-year-olds can find global positions through the UN's International Service. There are also thousands of volunteer programmes worldwide at transitionsabroad.com.

Free accommodation



Enjoy millionaire views by housesitting. Photograph: Joe Raedle/Getty Images

Live for free in someone else's pad while they're away through one of the world's growing number of housesitting schemes. Usually the owners will have pets that require looking after too, and many welcome families as well as singles and couples. The amount of time you need to spend at the property each day varies: usually there's time to play and go on adventures, as long as you sleep there each night.

Some charge a sign-up or annual membership fee. Try these for starters: [trustedhousesitters.com](https://www.trustedhousesitters.com), [mindmyhouse.com](https://www.mindmyhouse.com), [housecarers.com](https://www.housecarers.com), [nomador.com](https://www.nomador.com), [housesitworld.com](https://www.housesitworld.com), [luxuryhousesitting.com](https://www.luxuryhousesitting.com), [housesitmatch.com](https://www.housesitmatch.com), [travelandtails.com](https://www.travelandtails.com).

Those lucky enough to own their own home could trade it for one by the sea or in a remote setting, through a houseswap website, most of which charge a fee. As well as the Guardian one ([guardianhomeexchange.co.uk](https://www.guardianhomeexchange.co.uk)), readers recommend [lovehomeswap.com](https://www.lovehomeswap.com), [homeexchange.com](https://www.homeexchange.com), [homebase-hols.com](https://www.homebase-hols.com). New site [knok.com](https://www.knok.com) specialises in swaps for families.

Most travellers are familiar by now with [couchsurfing.com](https://www.couchsurfing.com), where hosts offer rooms, or a place on a sofa or even floor, for free in return for good old fashioned company.